

ATLAS AND MANUAL OF DERMATOLOGY AND VENEREOLOGY. By W. Burckhardt. Translated and edited by S. Epstein. Second Edition. (Pp. 306; figs. 187. 132s.) London: Baillière, Tindall & Cox, 1964.

PROFESSOR BURCKHARDT, who is an eminent dermatologist from Zurich, Switzerland, is the author of this book, which has been translated and prepared for the English-speaking reader by Dr. Stephen Epstein of Minnesota, U.S.A.; furthermore, Dr. P. A. G. Smith of the London Hospital has checked the manuscript from the point of view of the British reader. The result is excellent and indeed this is the best, low-priced skin atlas available in the English language today. The photographs are of an extraordinarily high standard and particularly is this true of the colour illustrations, most of which occupy a full page. Some of the illustrations, for example, Fig. 34 ringworm of the scalp, Fig. 45 carbuncle, Fig. 126 infantile eczema, and Fig. 146 lymphatic leukemia, are so good that one can truly say that if a student could memorise these photographs then he would have little difficulty in diagnosing these conditions as they occur in life. The disadvantage of an atlas is, of course, that the student does tend to memorise a photograph which usually has no depth and, when confronted with a patient with the same condition with slight variations, he fails to recognise the condition. In this atlas the excellence of the photography does in many instances compensate for "lack of depth."

The black and white illustrations are not quite so good, but, nevertheless, they too are of a high standard. In many instances the histology of common skin diseases is included, and this is increasingly important for the student who wishes to understand the subject.

The text is simply and clearly written under standard headings. It would perhaps prove a little uninteresting to a good student since the conditions are dealt with in a rather stereotyped manner as simple descriptions of one reaction or another, and there is no real effort made to show the importance of regarding dermatology as a part of general medicine and not as a subject "out on a limb." It is mainly on recommendations regarding treatment that one might differ from the views expressed by the authors, but for the most part these differences are of emphasis and essentially indicate the differences in treatment used on the Continent and in this country. One would, perhaps, for example, quibble about the recommended use of vaccines for boils, anti-histamine ointment for flea-bites, X-ray therapy for plantar warts, but one would object strongly to systemic aureomycin for molluscum contagiosum, and the statement that "electro-surgical or surgical removal" is necessary for the treatment of anthrax of the skin is certainly incorrect today.

At the end of the book there are several very useful tables giving selected common contact allergens and their patch test concentrations, which are divided conveniently into lists of those required for the identification of industrial contactants, medications, clothing, cosmetics, and dyes, and finally plants. There is a useful bibliography of standard books of dermatology for further reading. Apart from this, there are no references in the text.

There is a short section on venereal diseases which contains some rather horrifying photographs. This section is necessary because in America and on the Continent the two subjects of dermatology and venereology are still kept in juxtaposition. Happily, this is not the case in the United Kingdom.

In conclusion, one can thoroughly recommend this moderately priced and beautifully produced atlas with much praise for the colour photography which alone would make this book worth the price for both undergraduate students and general practitioners. J. M. B.